

Patent Claims

1. Method for creating individual pictures, cards and similar items comprising at least the following steps
 - a) the application is explained to the user on a preview window on a screen,
 - 5 b) whereby a language and communication selection can be activated, and
 - c) whereby the user then selects the picture or card motif from standard motifs kept in the system and/or from motifs supplied by the user himself and embeds in a layout,
 - 10 d) whereby a portrait recording of the user is created and embedded in the layout, and,
 - e) as desired, an individual or standard greeting and message text is created by the user and integrated into the layout,
 - 15 f) the ready-to-output product on the screen, which can be printed and/or sent and/or stored, is controlled by the user and, as desired, is accepted or else is edited and corrected by repeating at least steps c) to 3) of the method,
 - g) at which point subsequently the payment and billing function is then started,
 - 20 h) and finally the finished product is outputted.
2. Method for creating a portrait recording, especially for creating individual pictures, cards and similar items according to claim 1, whereby by means of a digital video camera a sequence of pictures of the user is recorded and, in this manner, a video stream is generated and the best picture is selected either manually or automatically.
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3. Method for creating a portrait recording according to claim 2, whereby the format used is a DP stream in progressive recording mode.
4. Method for creating a portrait recording according to claim 2 or 3, whereby for manual selection the individual pictures are offered to the user and the best picture is selected by the user.
5. Method for creating a portrait recording according to claim 4, whereby the user is offered an interaction element for selecting an individual picture.
6. Method for creating a portrait recording according to claim 2 or 3, whereby during the automatic selection photos blurred by movement are discarded and the user is only offered the sharpest pictures for selection.
7. Method for creating a portrait recording according to one or several of the preceding claims 2 to 6, whereby the user of whom a video stream is generated, is illuminated with constant light by means of white LEDs.
8. Method for creating a portrait recording according to one or several of the preceding claims 2 to 7, whereby the use is offered at least 4 pictures of the generated video stream to select from.
9. Method for the creation of a portrait recording according to one or several of the preceding claims 2 to 8, whereby the picture or pictures are displayed to the user as a mirror image of the user on a suitable monitor as a preview.
10. Method according to one or more of the preceding claims, whereby the completely created picture, card or similar item is outputted as hardcopy print-out or as postcard via an integrated printer or as an e-mail or by saving to a storage medium which the user has brought with him (e.g. a screen saver on the cellular phone, PDAs or similar devices) or by saving to an online database offered by the system.
11. Method according to claim 1 or 10, whereby the storage media for creating individual layouts with stored motifs or for storing the finished composed pic-

tures, cards and similar items are selected from external stationary or mobile storage media or online databases.

- 5 12. Method according to claim 10, whereby corresponding interfaces are envisaged for transfer by means of internet or wireless connection or external peripheral devices.
- 10 13. Interactive machine for the individual design of pictures, cards, especially postcards and similar items, comprising at least
- one monitor,
 - one camera with an adjustment apparatus,
 - one lighting unit,
 - means for operating the machine,
 - at least one interface for communication with external storage media and internet connection,
 - 15 ◦ one integrated DP system which in turn comprises at least one internal storage unit,
 - one output apparatus for creating the pictures and/or cards,
 - one payment unit,
 - one power supply,
 - means for mobility of the machine for location-independent placement.
 - 20 ◦ anti-theft protection,
 - one remote-maintenance unit.
14. Machine according to claim 13, whereby the camera involves a digital video camera for generating a video stream.
- 25 15. Machine according to claim 13 or 14, whereby the lighting unit features a photometer and several LED diodes for generating constant light.

16. Machine according to claim 13, whereby the monitor is a touch-screen monitor.
17. Machine according to claim 13, whereby the means for operating the machine are a keyboard and/or a joystick.
- 5 18. Machine according to one of the claims 13 to 17, whereby the output unit is a thermosublimation printer.
19. Machine according to one of the claims 13 to 18, whereby the interface is suitable for various digital storage media.
- 10 20. Machine according to one of the claims 13 to 19, which also features, in addition to the conventional power supply, solar modules for generating solar energy and/or recharging batteries.
21. Machine according to one of the claims 13 to 20, whereby the means for movement are wheels or casters or appliances for carrying.
- 15 22. Machine according to one of the claims 13 to 21, whereby the theft prevention means permit physical attachment of the apparatus at the individual location and/or emission of signals which are perceptible acoustically, visually and/or via radio.
- 20 23. Machine according to one of the claims 13 to 22, whereby for remote maintenance wireless communication means are integrated, or data cables are available.
24. Machine according to one or more of the preceding claims 13 to 23, whereby it features a franking unit.
25. Machine according to one or more of the preceding claims 13 to 24, whereby it features a motion sensor suitable for the detection of approaching people.

26. Machine according to one or more of the claims 13 to 25, whereby the outer sides of the machine serve as advertising spaces and are designed as a background-illuminated display and/or as an electronic advertising panel.